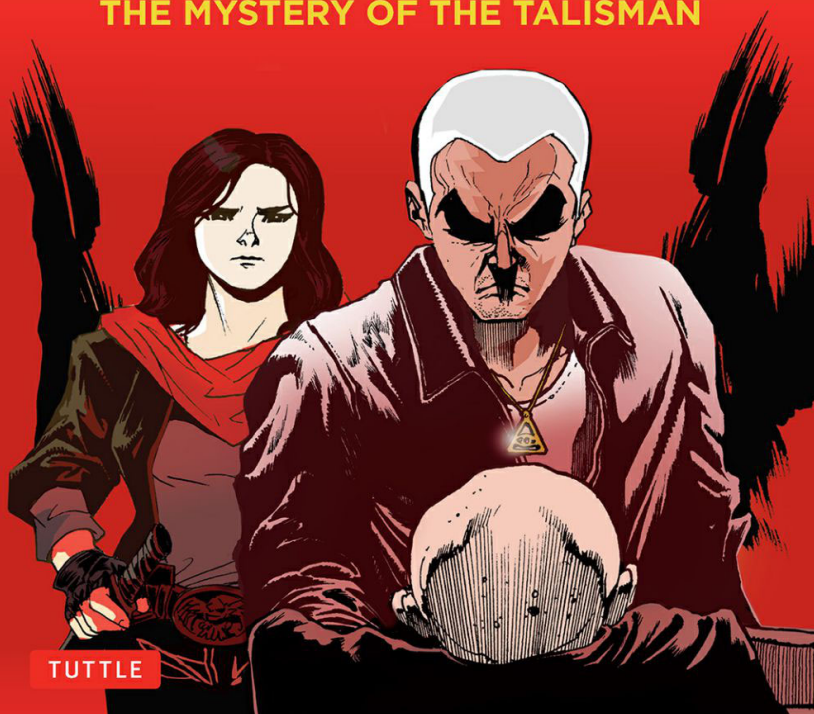


A graphic novel by **ARNOLD ARRE**

# THE WORLD OF **ANDONG AGIMAT**

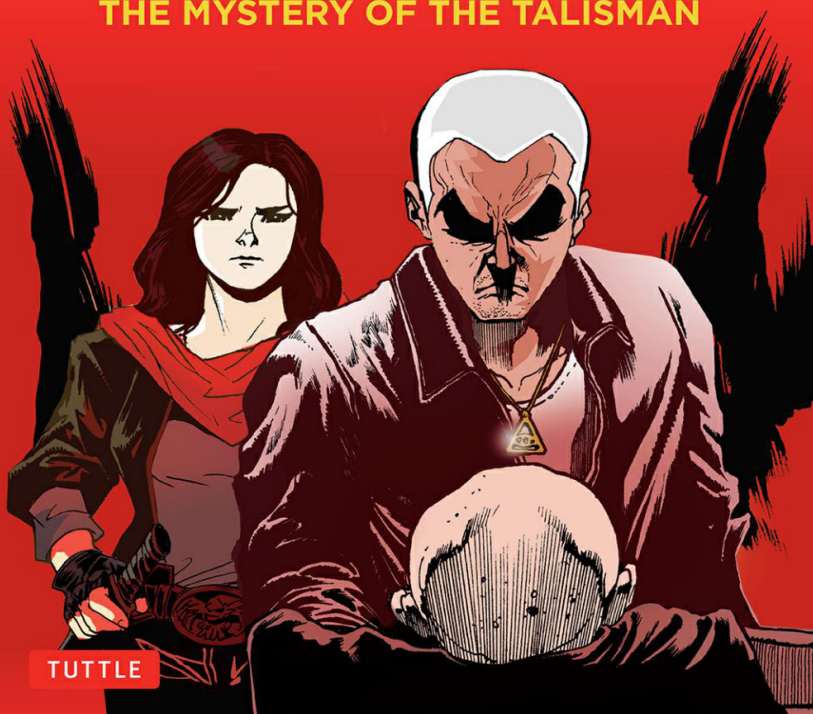
**THE MYSTERY OF THE TALISMAN**



A graphic novel by **ARNOLD ARRE**

# THE WORLD OF **ANDONG AGIMAT**

THE MYSTERY OF THE TALISMAN



**TUTTLE**





# ANDONG AGIMAT

THE MYSTERY OF THE TALISMAN

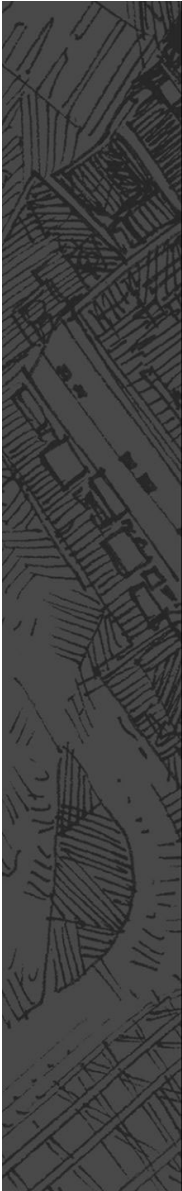
A graphic novel by  
ARNOLD ARRE



TUTTLE Publishing

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## “What would you like you see in a superhero comic?”

That was the question Arnold asked us in the wake of the resurgence of interest in Darna perpetuated by the new comic book and talk of a movie and TV series.

Of course, Arnold already had something in mind when he asked our opinion about this distinctly American invention: a being gifted with powers and abilities greater than that of an ordinary person who fights injustice in a colorful circus costume.

Coming from depression-era immigrant creators in New York, the superhero is the most identifiable symbol of American comics. I stress the term American because the superhero is not the most popular image in comics from other cultures. And even when the superhero is transplanted to other cultures, the concept takes on different permutations such as the bug-headed riders and crayon colored rangers in Japan, kung fu fighters in China, amoral thieves in Italy and masked luchadores in Mexico.

In the Philippines, while Mars Ravelo borrowed heavily from American iconic figures such as Superman, Captain Marvel and Wonder Woman, other super heroic figures without the colorful costumes have been popular. The herioc "agimat" stories and movies have been popular to Filipinos and can be traced to our myths and legends.

With Mythology Class, Arnold went back to these myths and legends. With his interest in FPJ and Ramon Revilla action movies, he now brings these legends to the streets. So what kind of superheroes did Arnold have in mind? Superheroes without the cultural trappings of American comics. Superheroes steeped in mythology but sharpened by the dirty grey tabloid world. Superheroes that are different and yet familiar. New and yet remembered.

The world of Andong Agimat.

Emil Flores  
Quezon City  
January 2006



I think storytellers tend to be unsatisfied people. After all, why else would we go around creating our own worlds, reshaping reality, analyzing people's thinking processes and behaviors to put actions and words into characters we control? I think a lot of storytellers are not content with simply recounting and recording the reality we see around us. We feel that the universe can be better, or if not necessarily better, can have more meaning to it.

And we storytellers aren't only unsatisfied with reality. We are often unsatisfied even with the fictional realities crafted by other storytellers. Heck, we are often unsatisfied with the stories we ourselves have written in the past. So we constantly create new stories, and we deconstruct and pick apart the world around us and the stories we consume and then try to reconstruct new stories in our never ending quest to find a satisfaction that deep inside we know will never come.

Arnold Arre is definitely one storyteller who is constantly unsatisfied. I've read (and published) most of his works and it's clear Arnold is always trying to imagine a better world and better stories. The *Mythology Class* showed how unsatisfied he is with the mundane real world and with the Westernized escapist fantasies meant to take readers away from it. *Trip to Tagaytay* showed his dissatisfaction with the present Philippines and the existing takes on what the future of the Philippines would be. *Martial Law Babies*, *After Eden*, and *Halina Filipina* all showed many examples of his distaste

for how low a lot of local pop culture has fallen, how superficial love stories have become, and how the mindset of Filipinos has devolved. All his graphic novels have taken the various tropes of past stories and used them to reconstruct new realities, characters, and experiences that make readers believe in a better and/or more meaningful world.

With *Ang Mundo ni Andong Agimat*, Arnold takes on genres whose main purpose is to allow readers to escape reality: superheroes and Filipino fantasy/action movies. These are stories that grew popular precisely because of both the readers and storytellers need to escape reality. But as the popularity of these genres have grown, the tropes that make up their structure have become worn out. So Arnold again works his magic and embraces the elements that allows these stories to do what they do best, but reconstructs and combines them in new ways that create a whole new story that does more than allow for escapism. With each scene, with each character's line, it made me imagine Arnold reading old superhero comics or watching old Filipino films and telling himself, "This could be so much better. This could do so much more. Audiences deserve better. The world deserves better." And as I turn the final page of this graphic novel, I feel he has shown us that indeed, something better was possible. And that's what the main character of Andong (and all the other characters in this Filipino epic) face in this story: a constant desire to be better, to

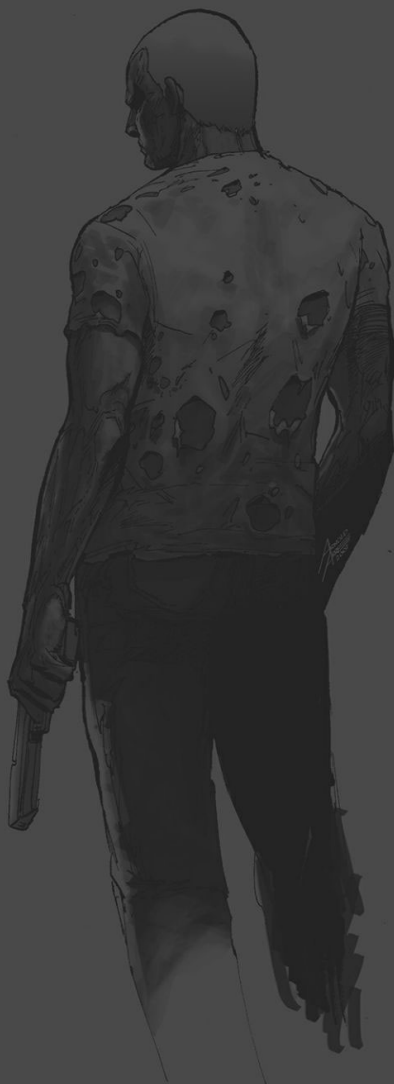
make the world better, because they aren't satisfied with who they are or the world around them.

I can't wait to see what type of stories Arnold will come up with next, what brilliant new realities he will create for us. It may be mean of me to say so, but I hope the world continues to irritate and dissatisfy him, like grains of sand irritating a clam and forcing it to turn them into beautiful pearls to find relief. I hope the man is never satisfied, because as a reader I will never be satisfied no matter how many amazing stories he produces.

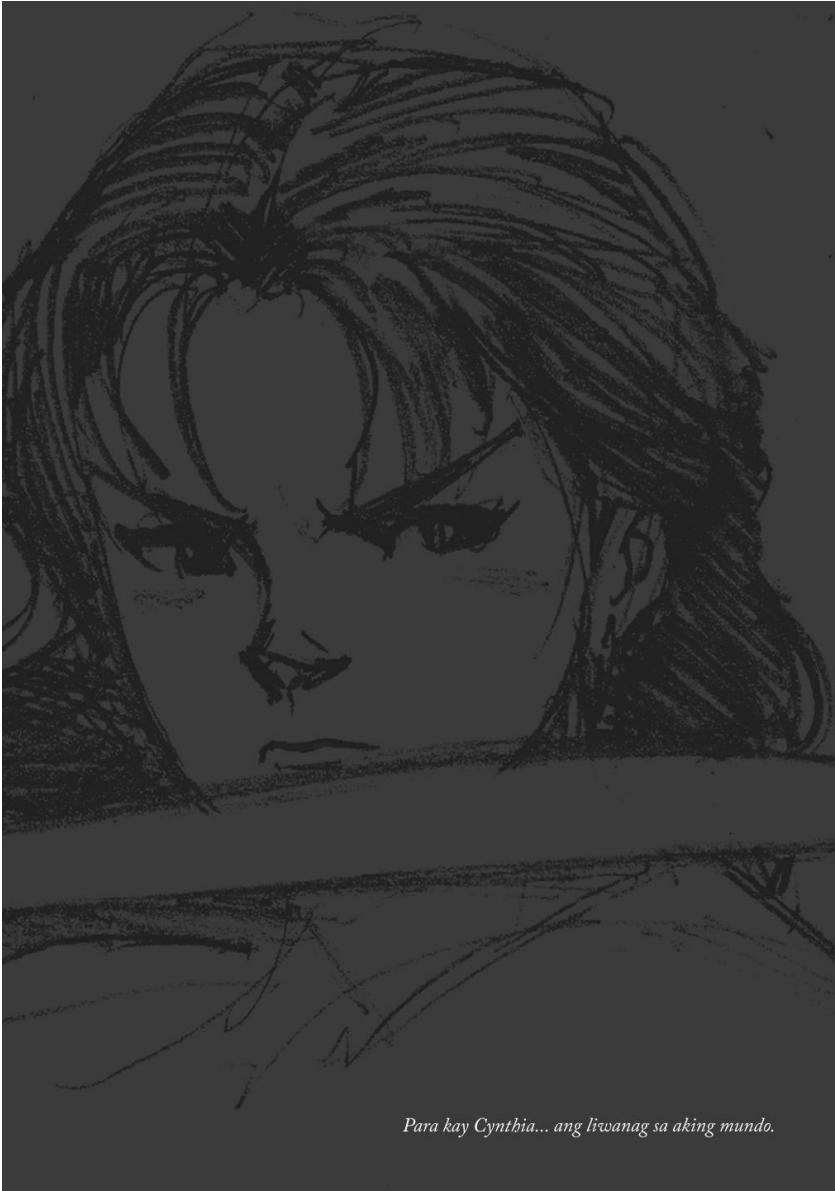
JAMIE BAUTISTA

Alabang

September 2017

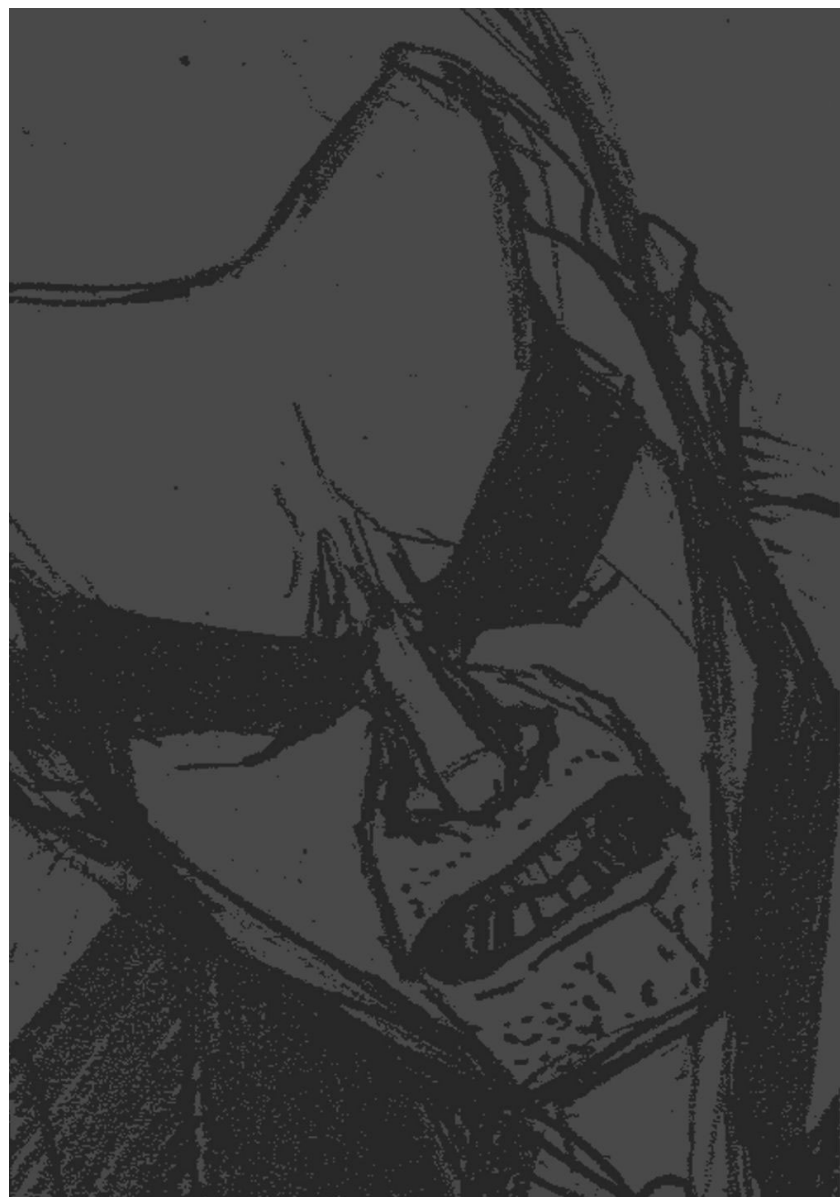






*Para kay Cynthia... ang liwanag sa aking mundo.*





Whether you believe it or not, my grandfather says, there was a time in our world when it was ruled by the strongest and most powerful beings on the face of the earth.

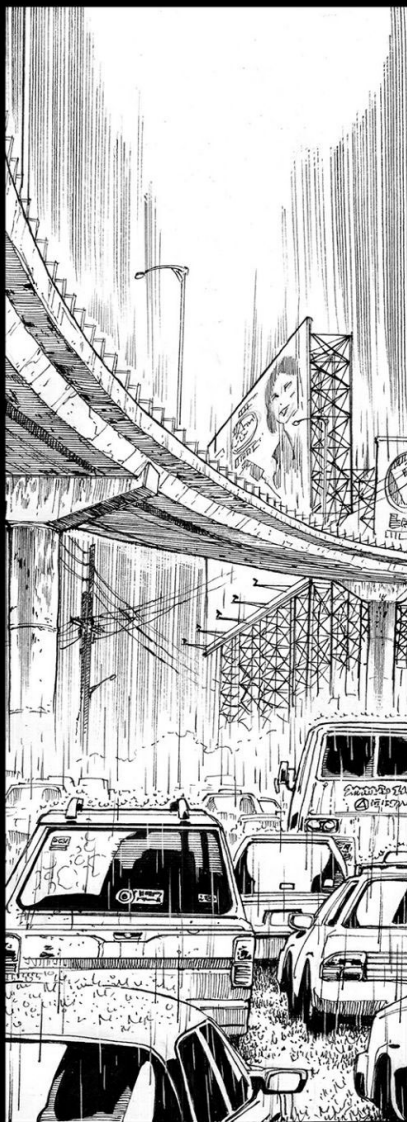
Some of them became guardians of justice... Defending the oppressed.

Others, however, became servants of darkness... Arriving to spread a gruesome plague among the population.

And from the century of conflict between these two forces were born the colorful stories of courage and bravery that shaped their world.

This is a world covered in miracles and wonders.

This is the world of Andong Agimat.





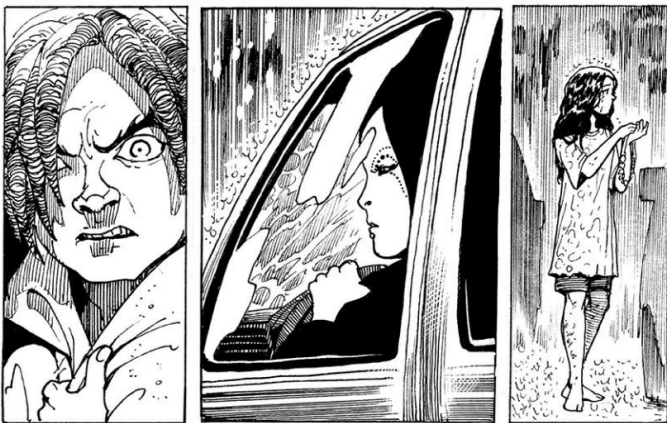
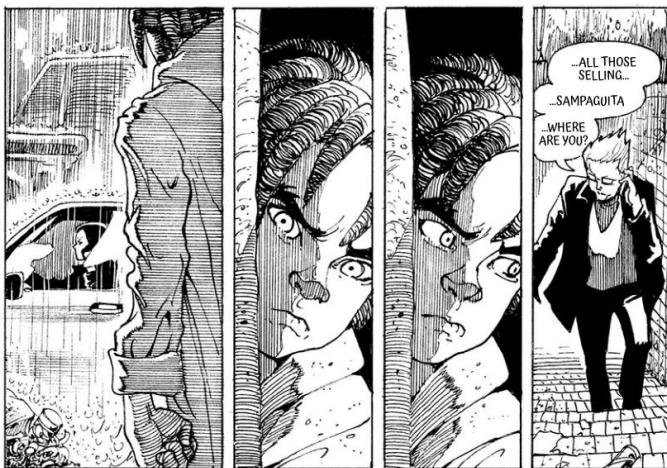




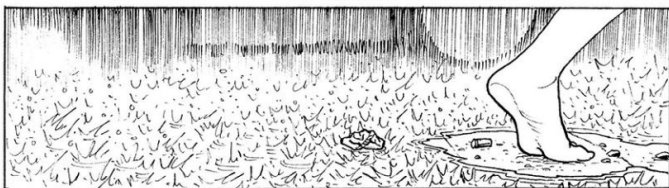
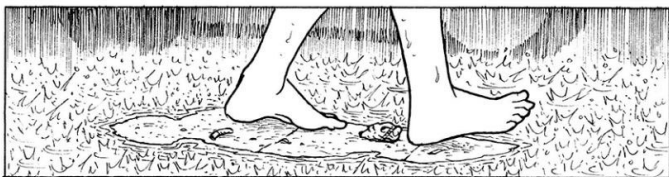










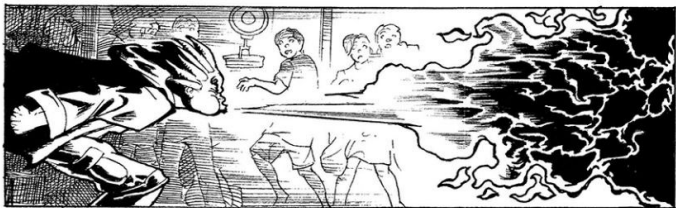
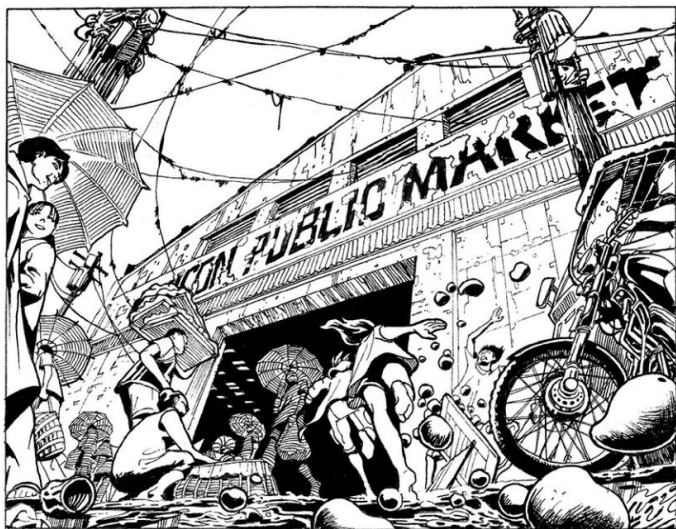


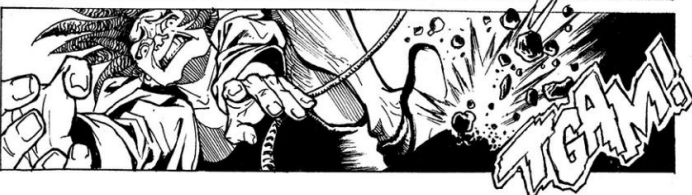


















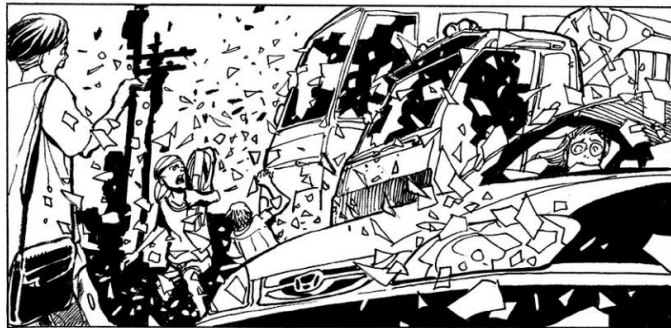
"WHY ARE YOU  
DOING THIS?"

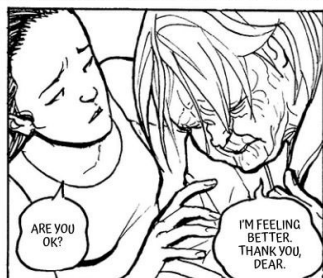


"HAVE I DONE  
SOMETHING  
WRONG?"

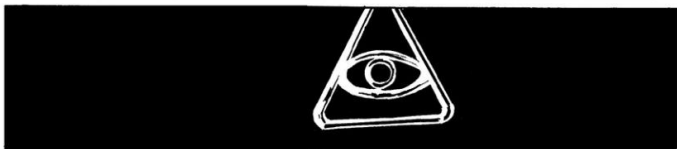
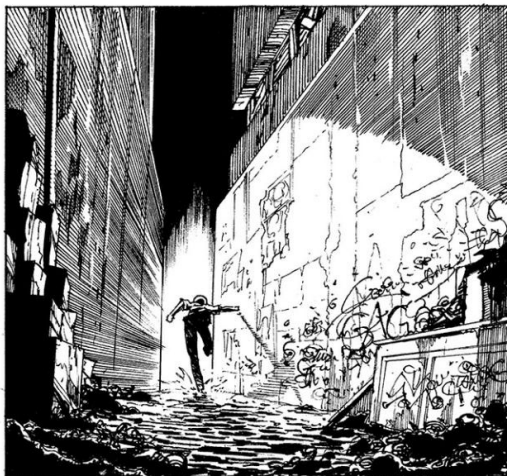


"PLEASE DON'T  
HURT ME"

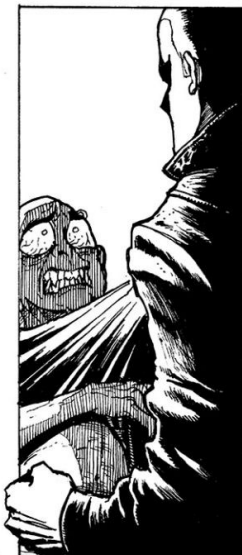
































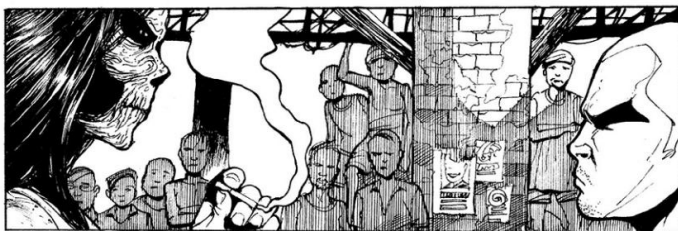








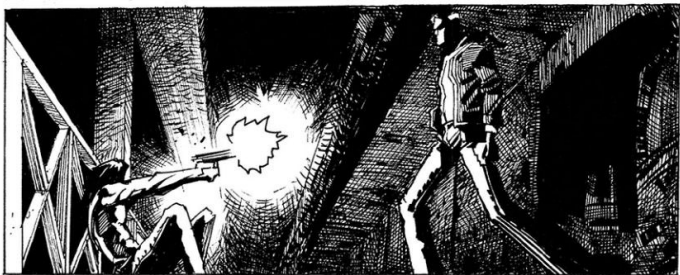










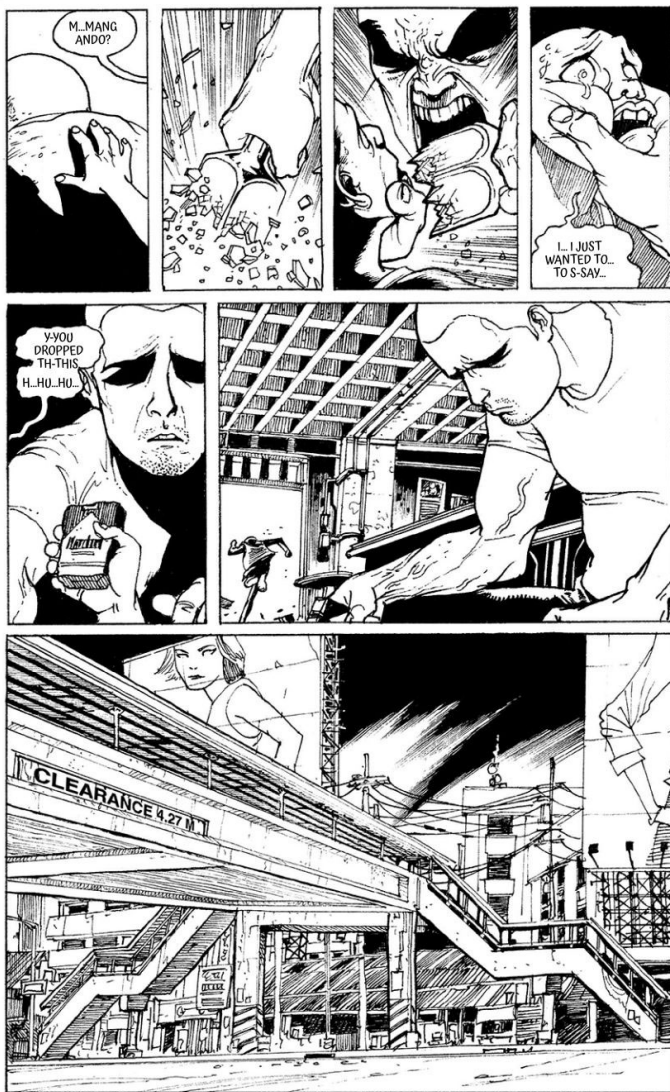


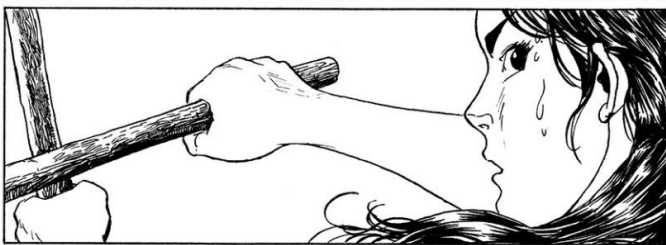


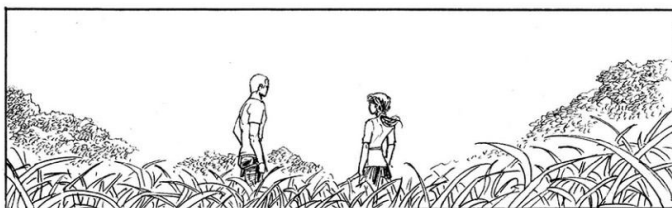




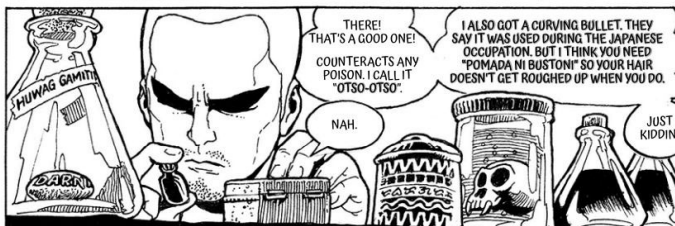




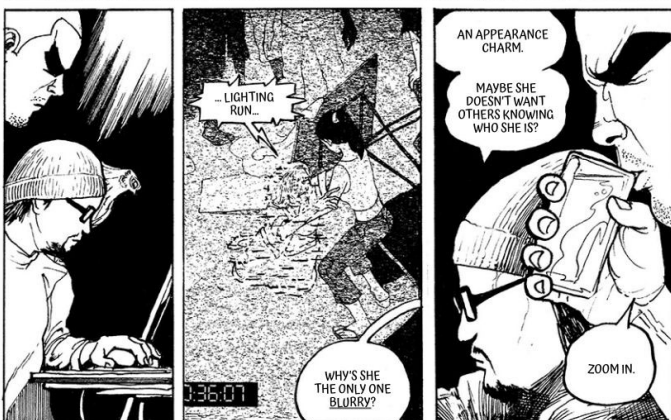


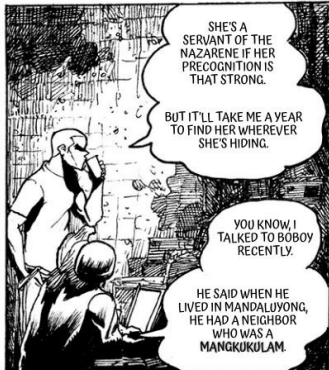


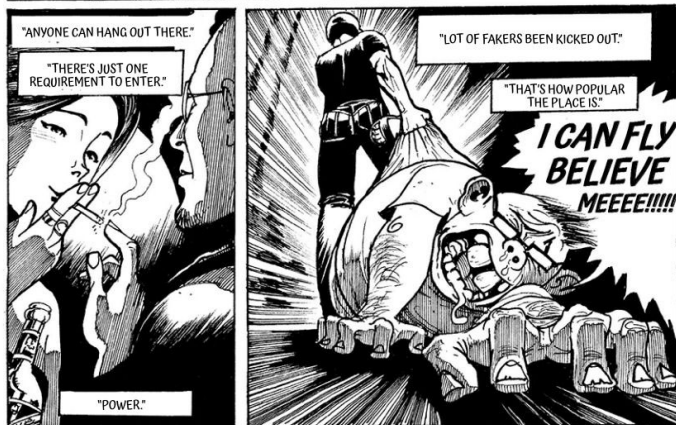
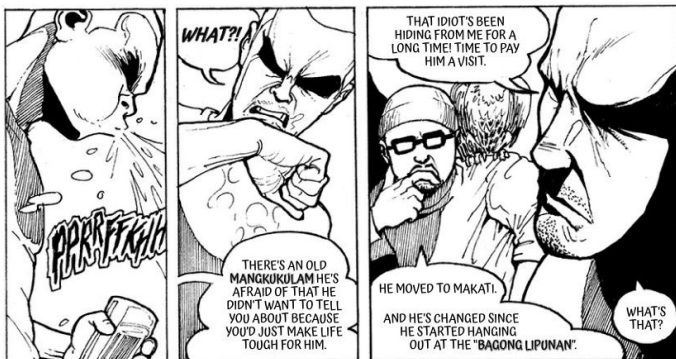




















THEY YOUR  
NEW FRIENDS?

DISRESPECTFUL  
HOODS?

NO, MAN,  
THEY'RE  
REALLY NICE.

THEY DIDN'T  
EVEN CHARGE  
YOU FOR THE  
STEREO YOU  
SHOT UP.

AND THEY  
CAVE ME  
A JOB.



AND DUDE,  
THEY CALL ME  
BOBOY HERE.  
I'M NOT  
"BOY BATO"  
ANYMORE. THAT  
WAS SO LAME.

YEAH, NOW  
YOU'RE SO NOT  
LAME YOU PICK  
UP BOTTLE CAPS  
FOR A LIVING.

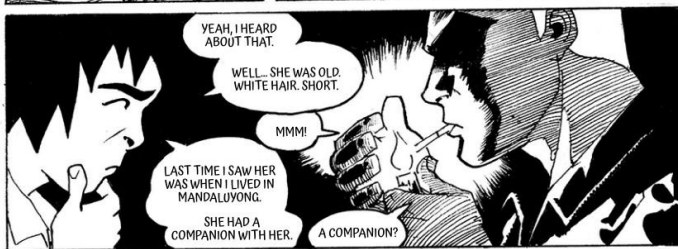


I KNEW YOU'D BE  
TROUBLE IF YOU  
SHOWED UP.

STUPID LAWIN.  
I'M GONNA FRY  
THAT DAMN BIRD  
OF HIS!

I JUST WANT YOU TO  
TELL ME WHERE THE  
MANGKUKULAM WHO  
USED TO BE YOUR  
NEIGHBOR LIVED. IT'S  
THE FIRST LEAD IN MY  
INVESTIGATION.

A LOT OF  
MAMBABARANG  
WERE MURDERED.  
I MIGHT FIND SOME  
INFORMATION THERE.



YEAH, I HEARD  
ABOUT THAT.

WELL... SHE WAS OLD.  
WHITE HAIR. SHORT.

MMM!

LAST TIME I SAW HER  
WAS WHEN I LIVED IN  
MANDALUYONG.

SHE HAD A  
COMPANION WITH HER.

A COMPANION?

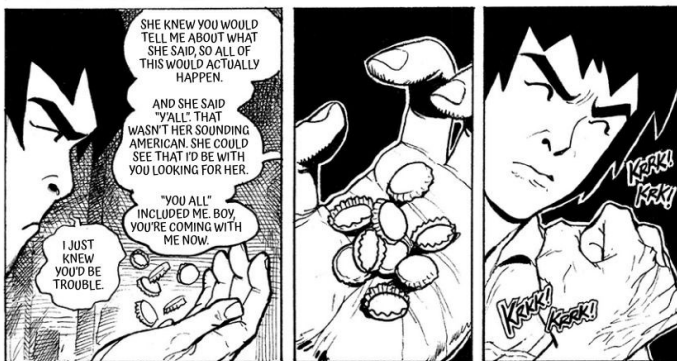
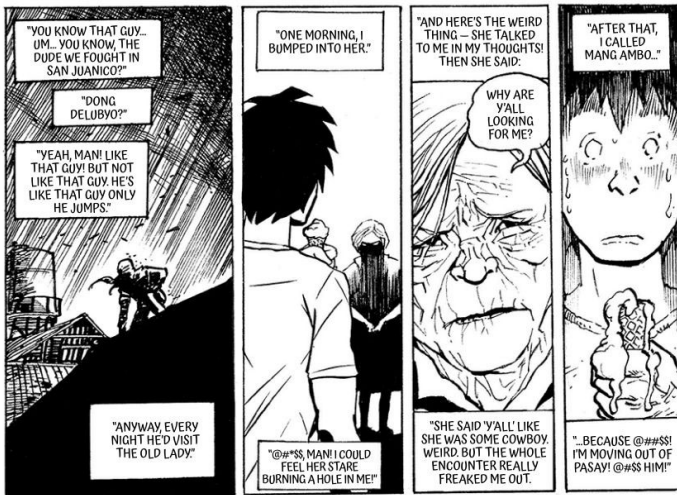


"HE'D VISIT HER  
REGULARLY. I DIDN'T GET  
A GOOD LOOK AT HIM SINCE  
IT WAS RAINING AT THE TIME."

"BUT HE  
WAS FAST."

"HAD SOMETHING  
COVERING HIS  
FACE."

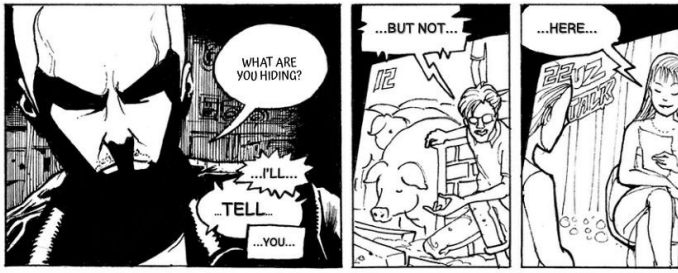
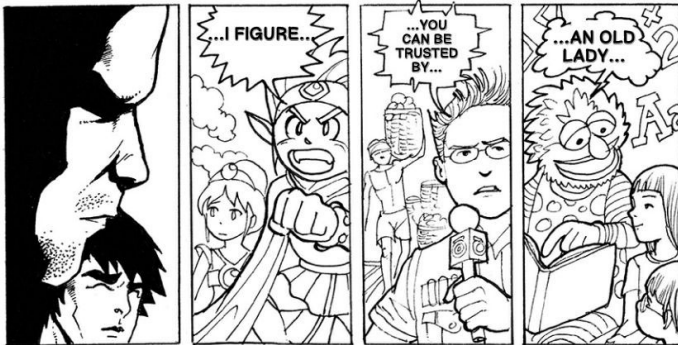
HE'D COME AROUND TWO IN  
THE MORNING. HE'D LEAP  
ACROSS THE ROOFTOPS.  
BUT WITHOUT A SOUND,  
DUDE! AMAZING!"

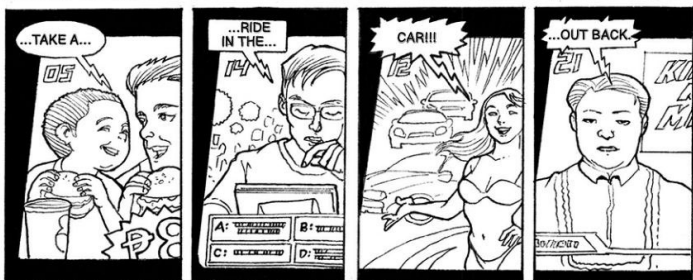














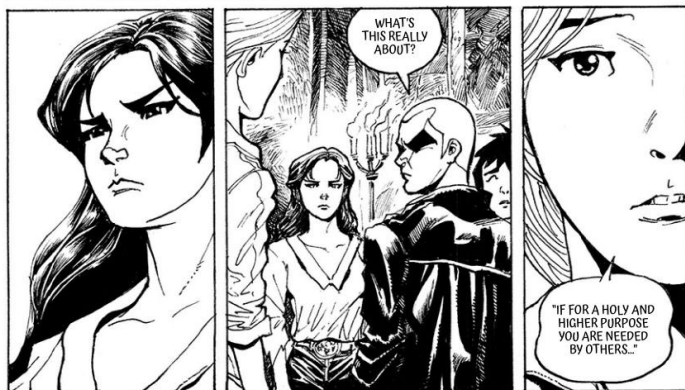
















"THE GODDESS MARIA WAS JUST AN OBSERVER FROM THE WORLD ABOVE."

BUT THE HEART CANNOT BE DENIED ONCE SOMETHING IN IT STIRS.



IT BEAT FOR A MORTAL, A KATIPUNERO WHO SACRIFICED IN HER WOODS...

...WHO DEFENDED MARIA'S HOME FROM THE INVADING SPANIARDS WHO WERE DESECRATING IT IN THE NAME OF WEAPONS AND WAR.



THAT IS WHEN MARIA FELT FOR THE FIRST TIME TRUE LOVE.

SHE TOOK HUMAN FORM AND REVEALED HERSELF TO HIM.

SHE THANKED HIM.

AND SO STARTED AN AFFECTION THAT WOULD GROW INTO A LOVE FOR THE AGES.



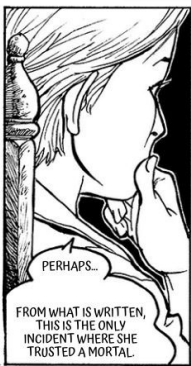
...BETWEEN A GODDESS AND A MORTAL.

MARIA IS THE ONE WHO PURSUED THE MAN, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND FROM WHAT I KNOW.

ALSO, THE MAN KNEW FROM THE START THAT IT WAS A DIWATA WHO HAD FALLEN FOR HIM...

...BECAUSE SUPPOSEDLY MARIA ALREADY TOLD HIM WHAT SHE REALLY WAS.

THAT'S HOW INTENSE IT IS WHEN A DIWATA FALLS IN LOVE.



PERHAPS...

FROM WHAT IS WRITTEN, THIS IS THE ONLY INCIDENT WHERE SHE TRUSTED A MORTAL.



BUT THEY DIDN'T LAST, RIGHT?

BECAUSE THAT WAS A FORBIDDEN LOVE, RIGHT?

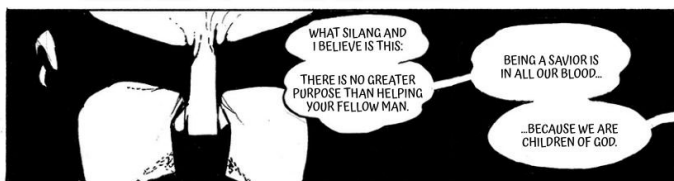
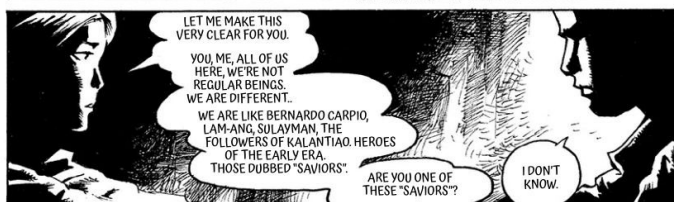
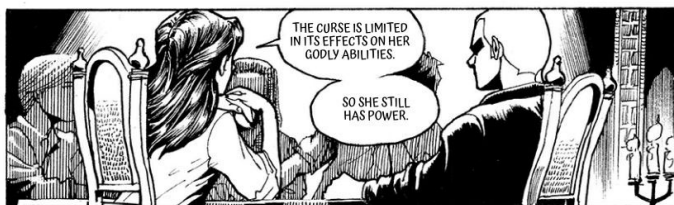
ONE WAS MORTAL...

AND THE OTHER...



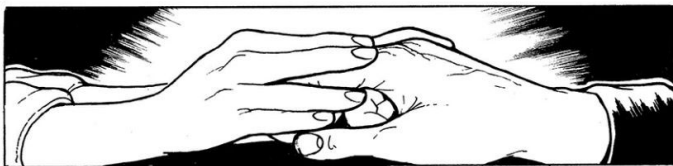
ALL WE KNOW IS THAT MARIA WAS CURSED BECAUSE OF THEIR LOVE.

THE CURSE OF FORGETFULNESS.



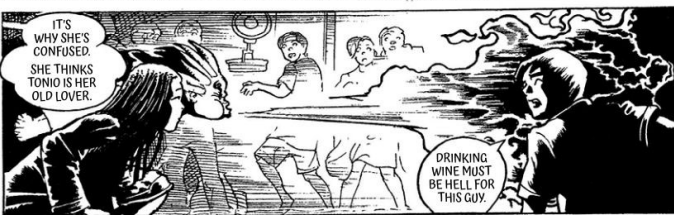








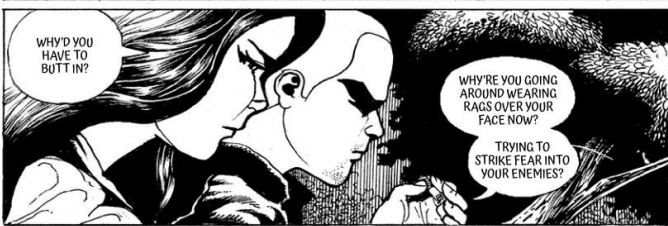
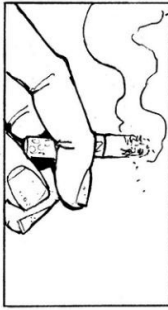












WHY'D YOU  
HAVE TO  
BUTT IN?

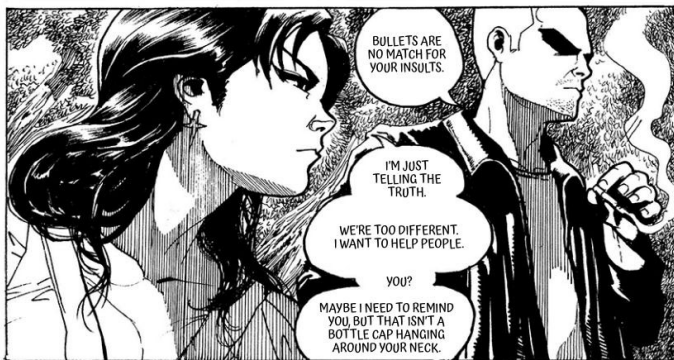
WHY'RE YOU GOING  
AROUND WEARING  
RAGS OVER YOUR  
FACE NOW?  
  
TRYING TO  
STRIKE FEAR INTO  
YOUR ENEMIES?

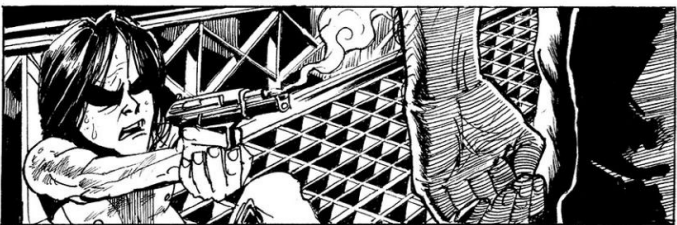


YES.  
  
I LEARNED  
THAT  
FROM YOU.

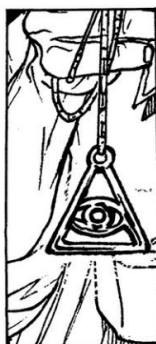


THEY'D BE  
RIGHT TO  
FEAR ME.





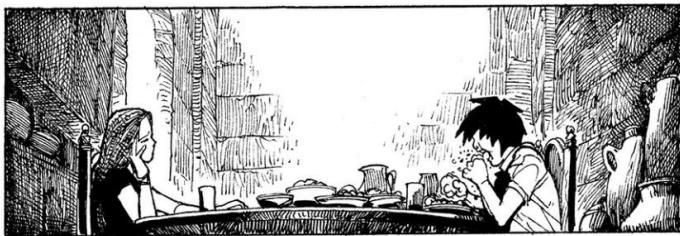




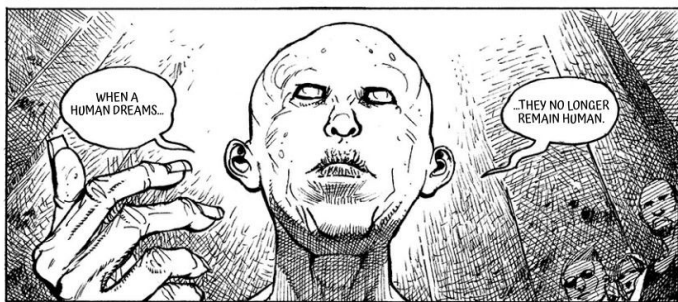
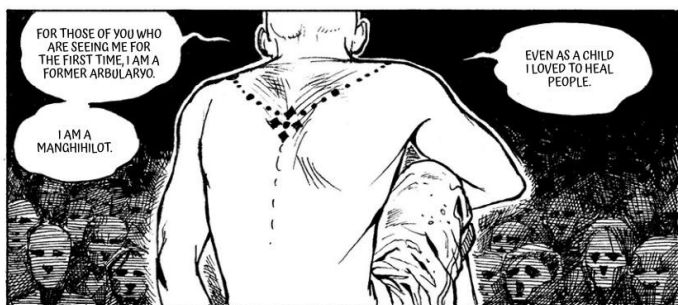


















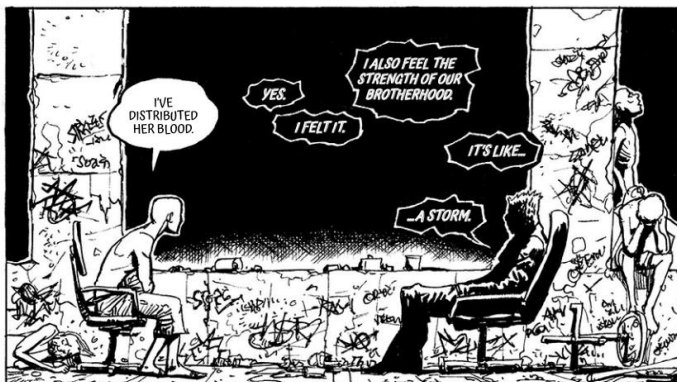










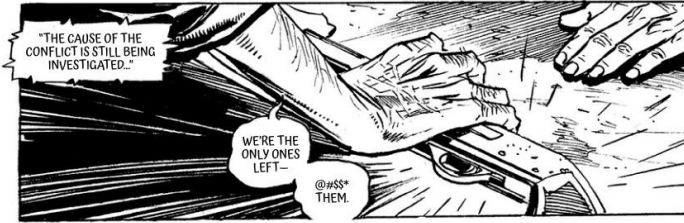










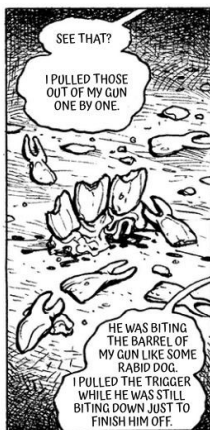




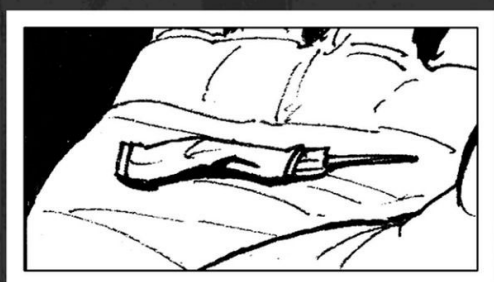






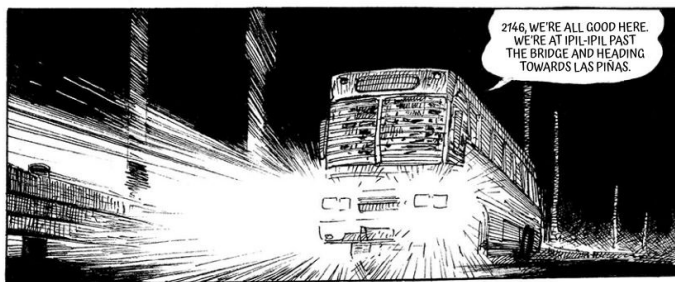








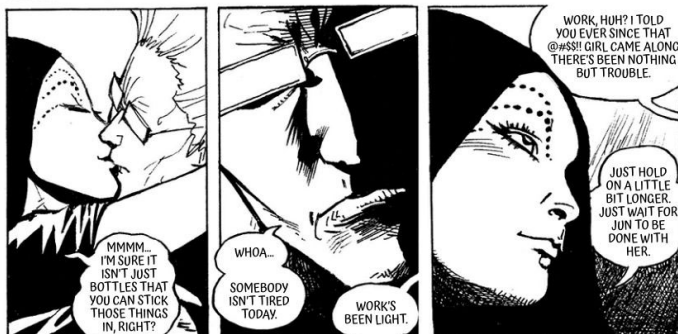
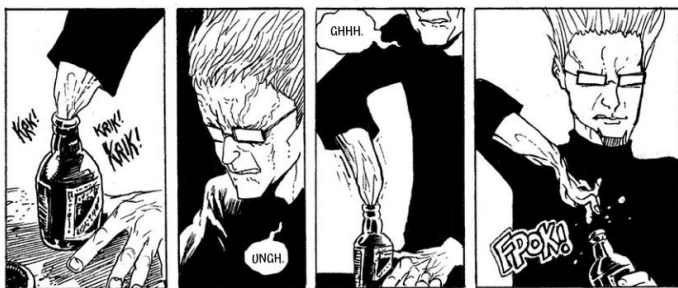










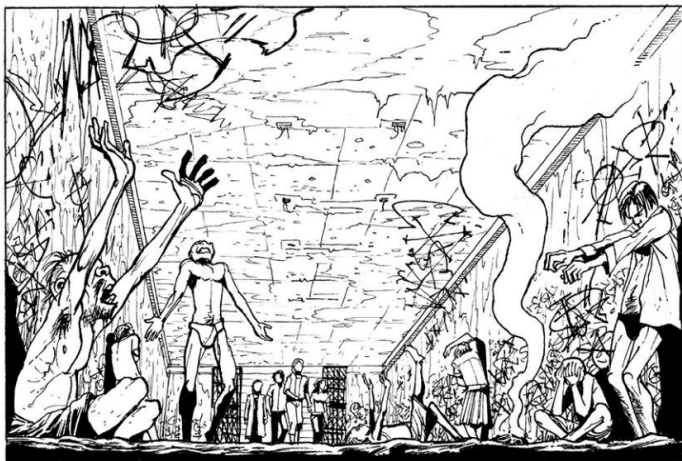














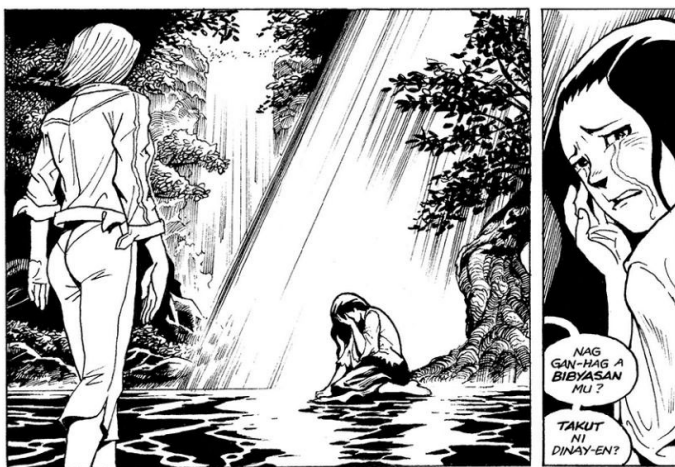


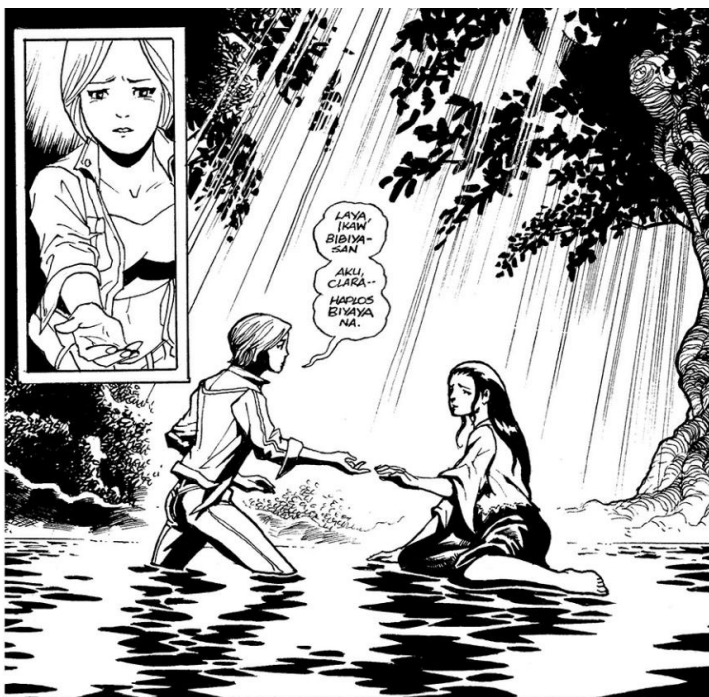


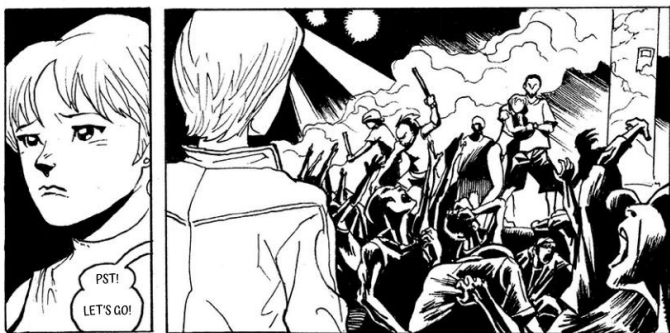
















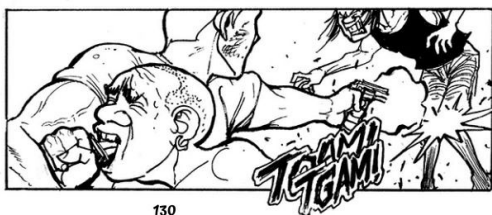




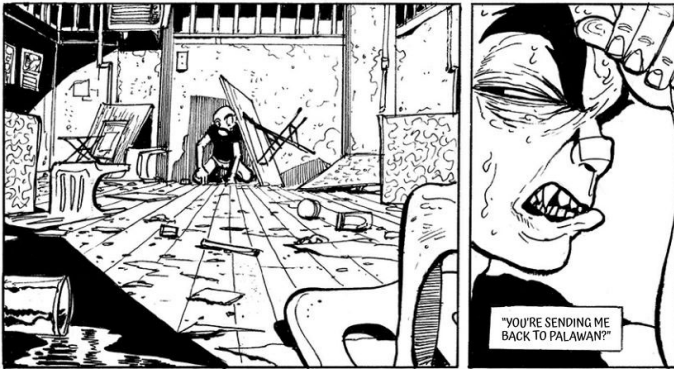
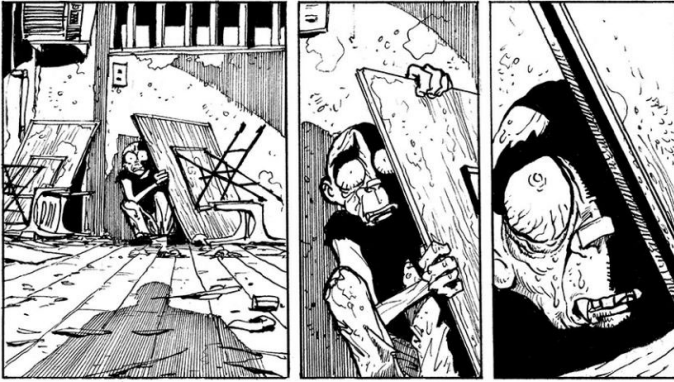


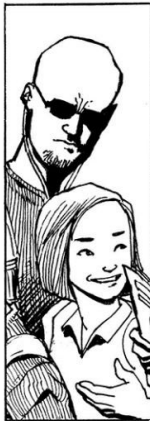
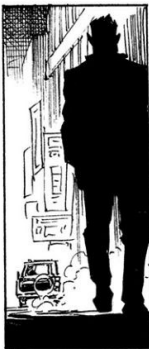




















"...AND THIS  
IS WHERE I  
DISCOVERED  
THE TRUTH."



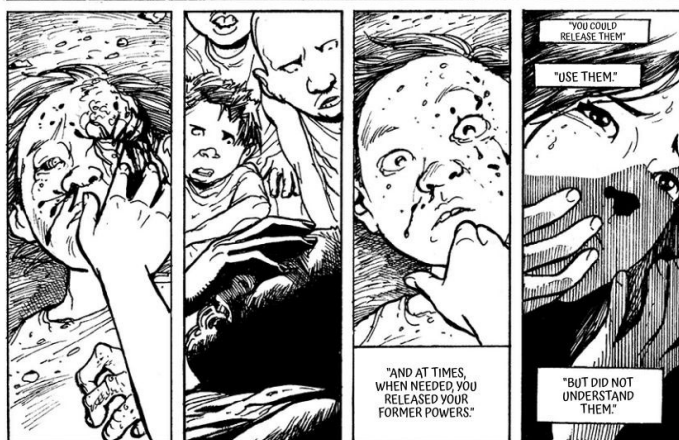
"YOU'D BEEN HIDING  
FOR SO LONG FROM  
THE SPANISH WHO  
WERE HIS SERVANTS."

"ALL THAT SUFFERING  
JUST BECAUSE YOU  
REFUSED TO JOIN HIM —  
AN ALLY OF DARKNESS"



"AND IT COST YOU  
YOUR LOVE"

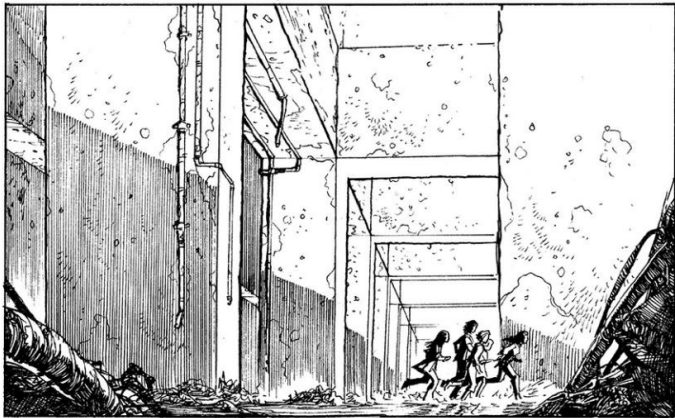












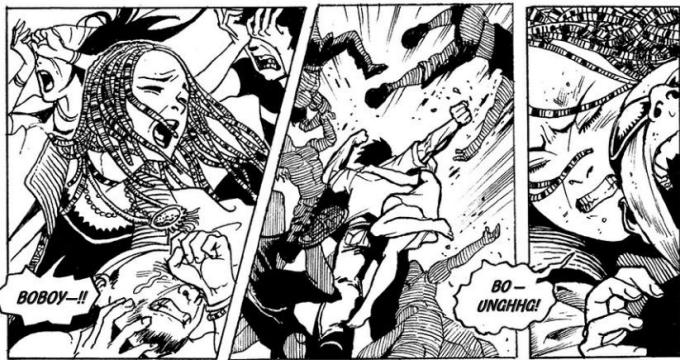




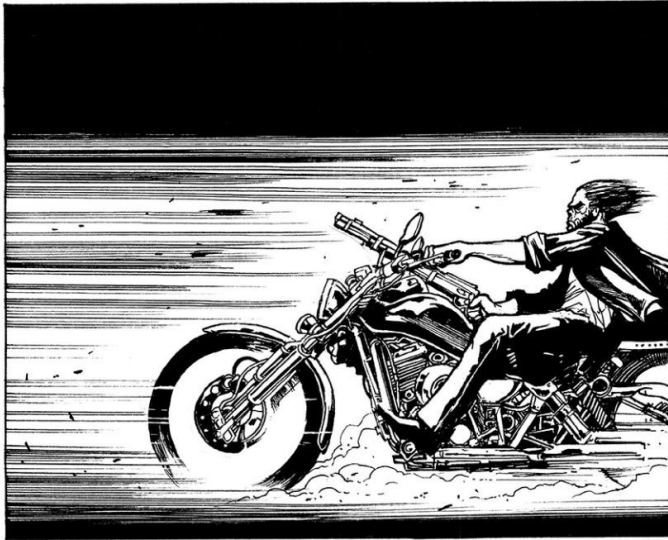




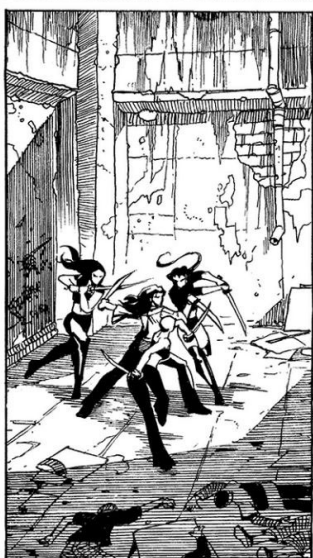
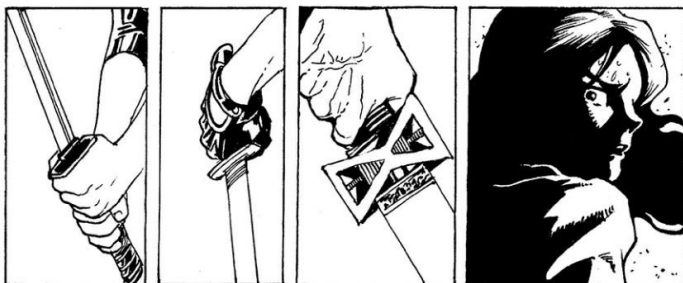






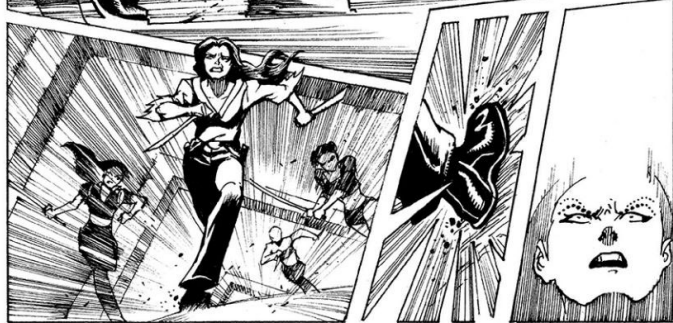




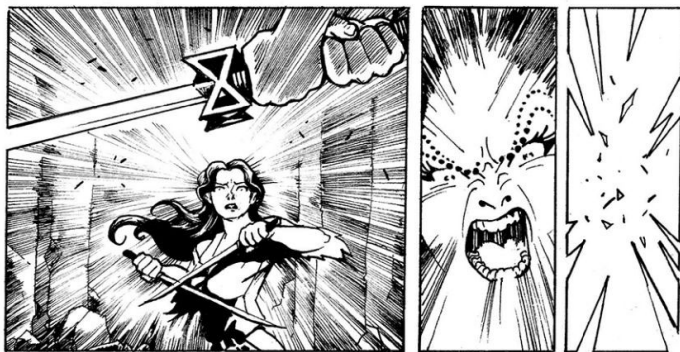








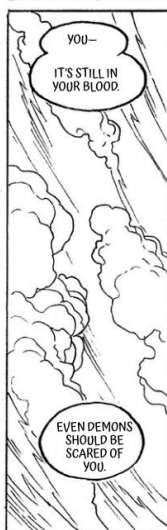






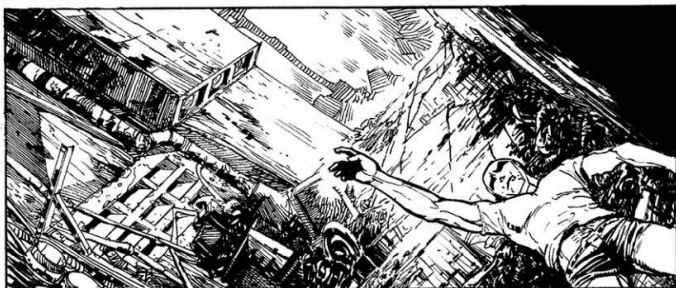




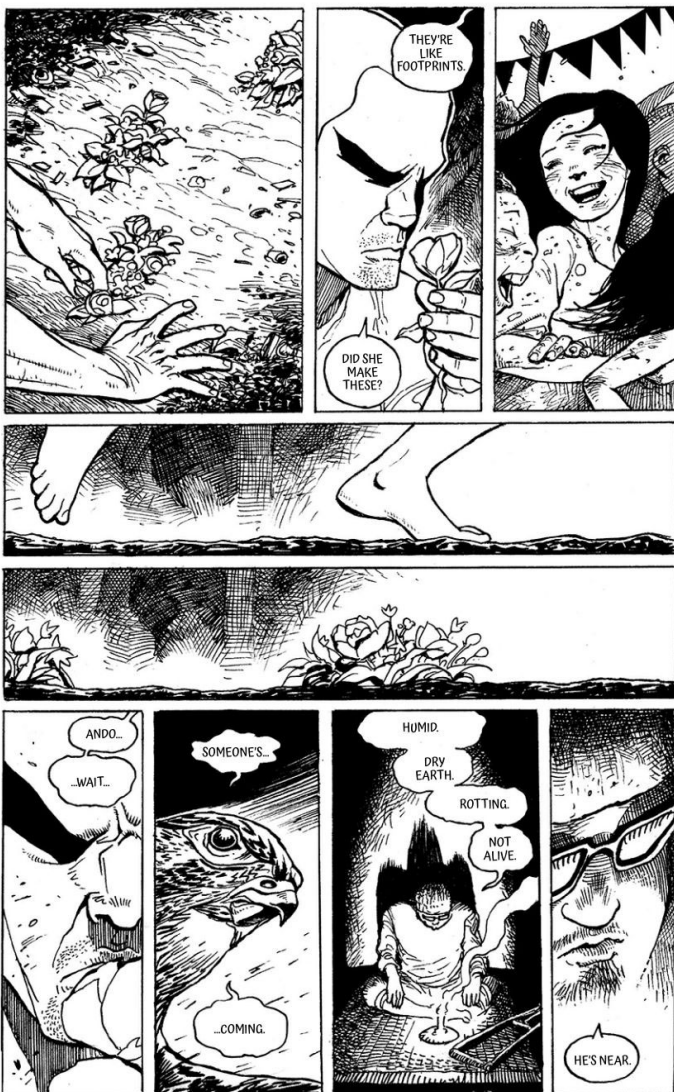




"...HE'S BEEN  
REPLACED BY A  
PROTECTOR."









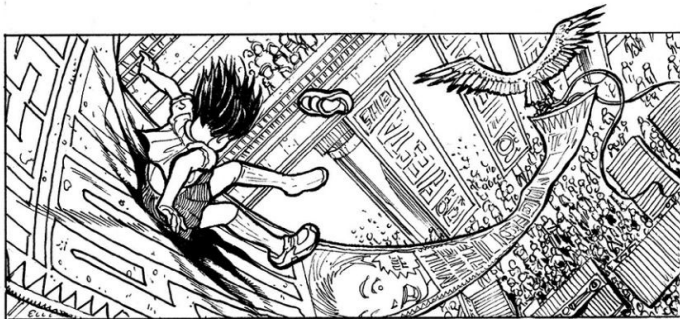






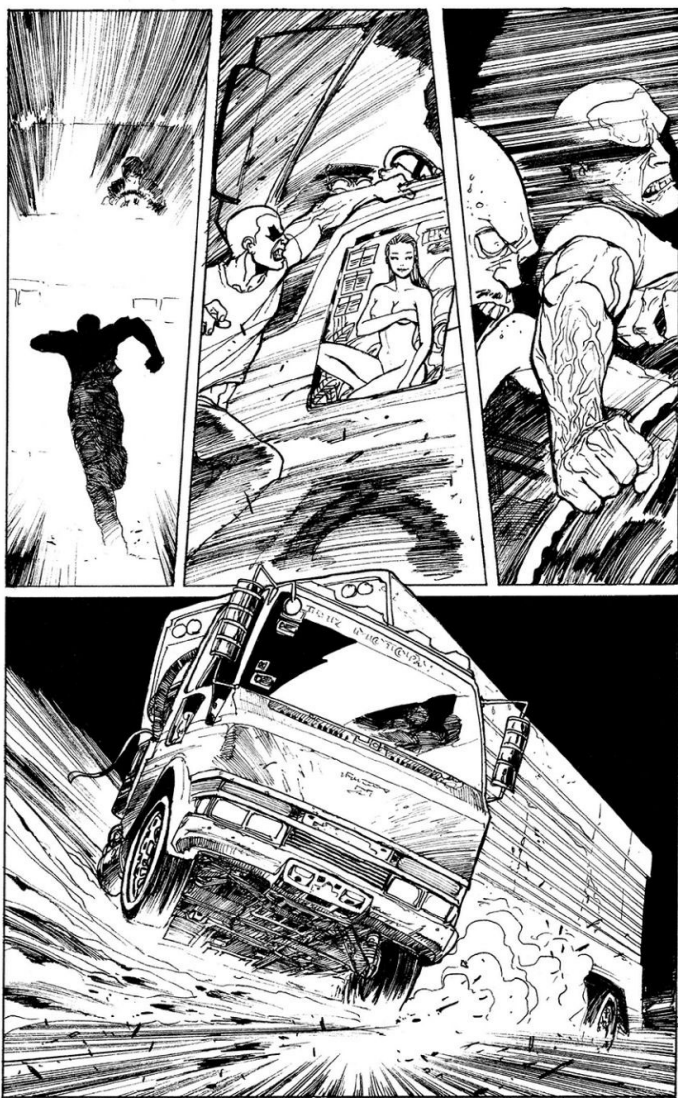








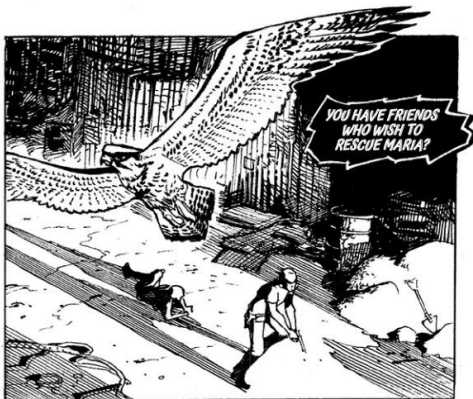








LAWIN—  
FIND HIM.

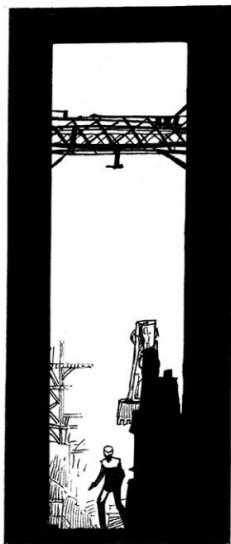


YOU HAVE FRIENDS  
WHO WISH TO  
RESCUE MARIA?



YOU  
SCARED?  
HUH?

YOU SHOULD  
BE. THEY'RE  
GOOD.

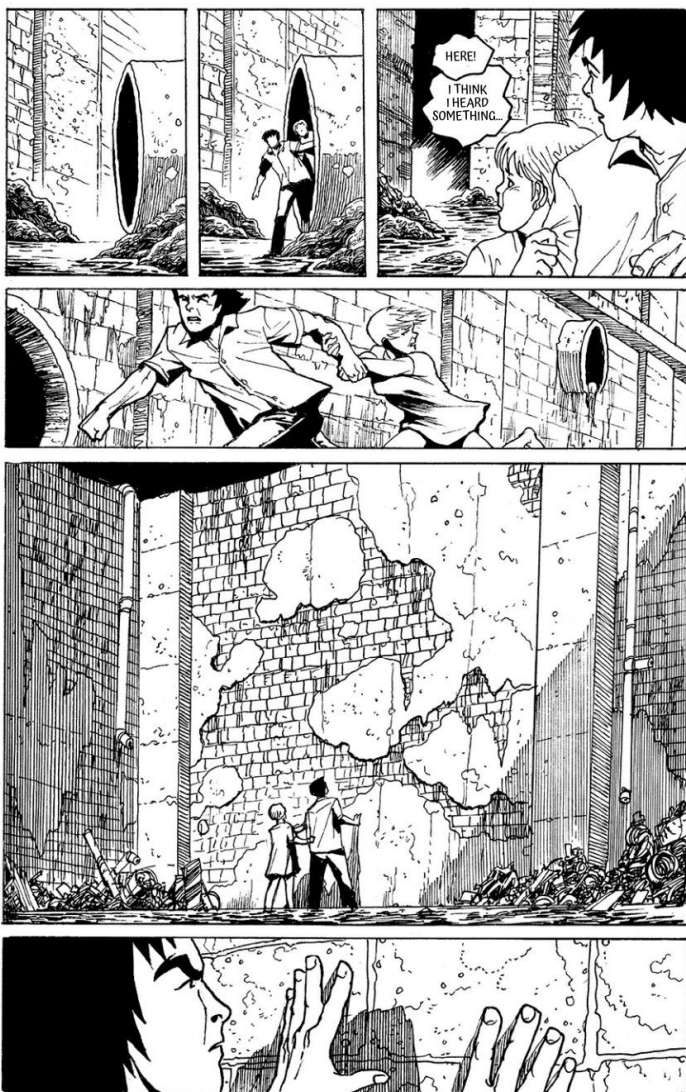


THEY  
MIGHT HAVE  
ALREADY  
SAVED HER.



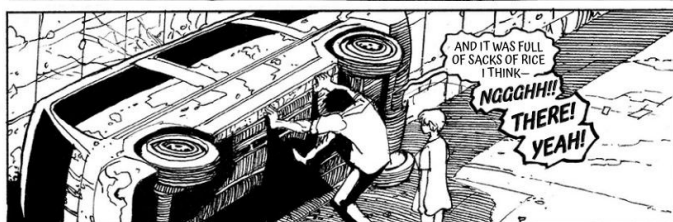
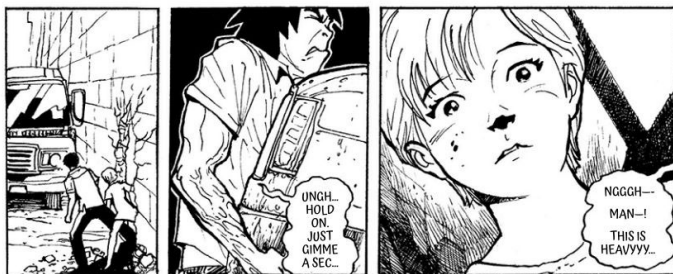
WE'LL SEE.

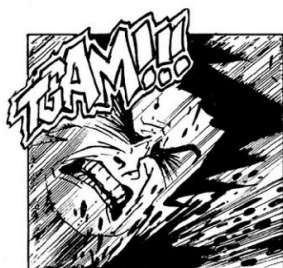


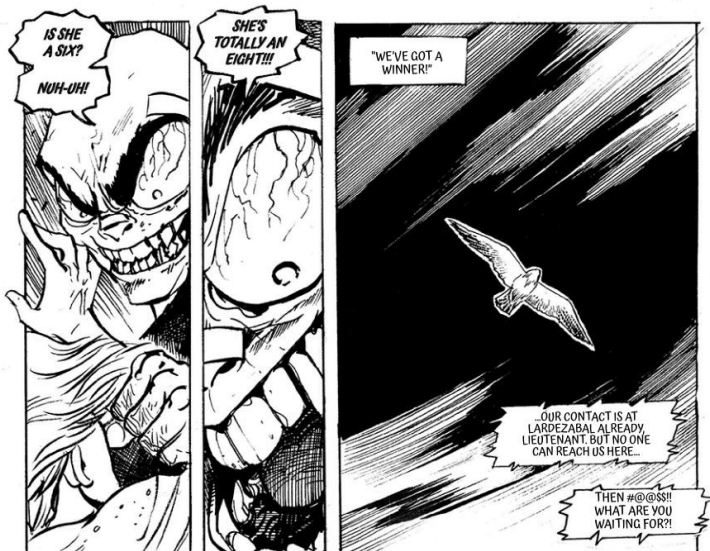




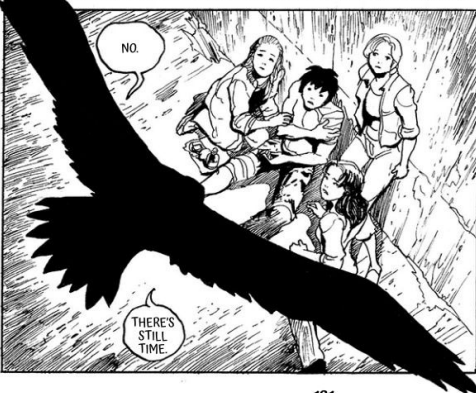








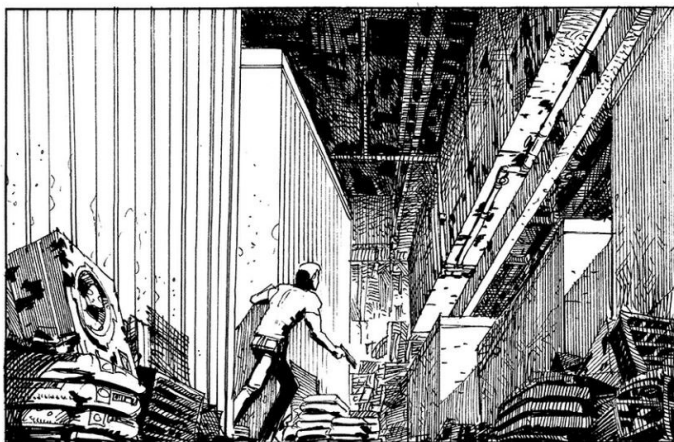






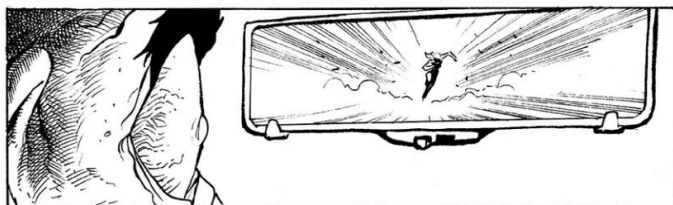


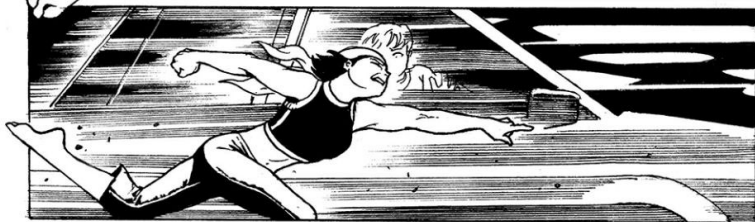






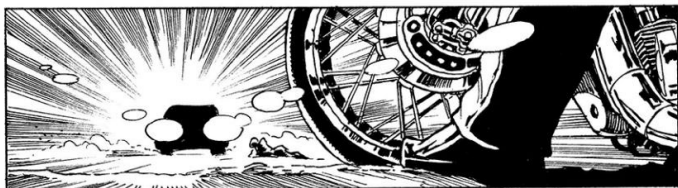




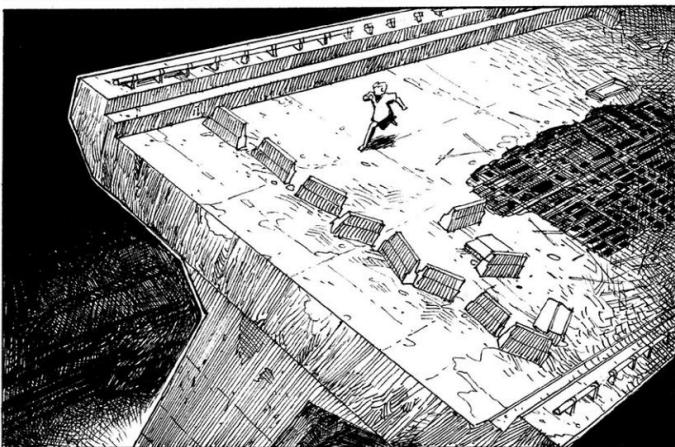


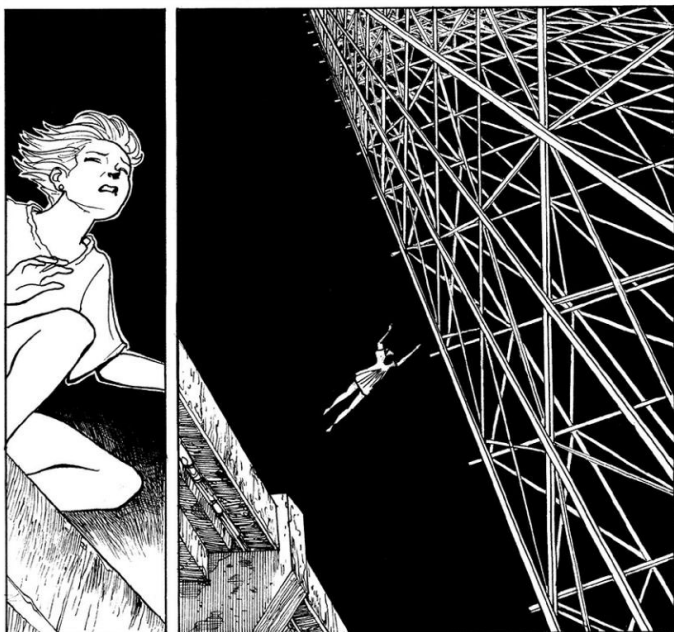


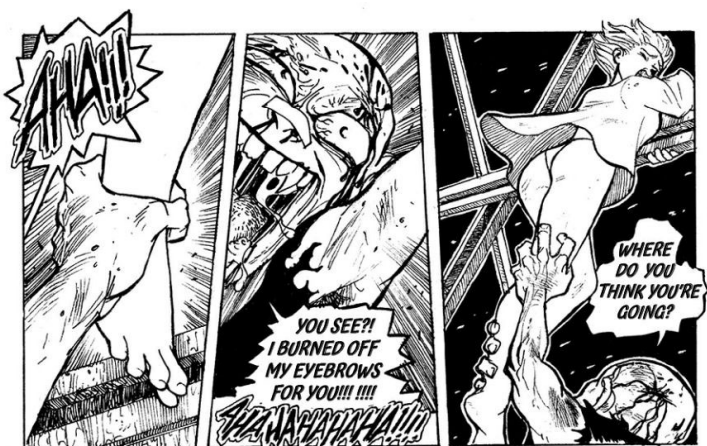




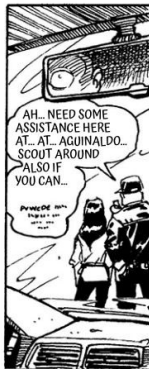




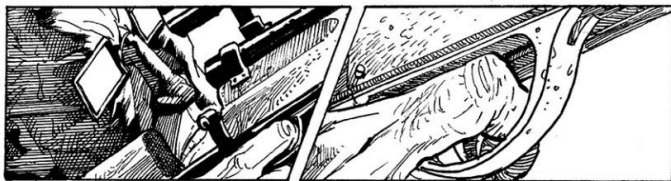


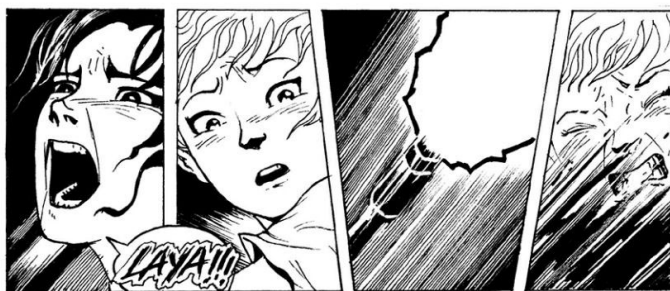






















OH MY GOD!!  
DON'T  
YOU  
LEAVE YOUR  
POSTS!!!



CLARA--!!  
CLARA,  
TALK TO HER!!!



FINE!  
KILL US  
ALL!!!



BUT WHO'LL  
BE LEFT TO  
REMIND  
YOU...

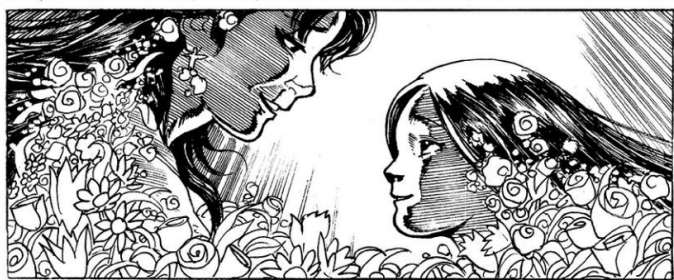
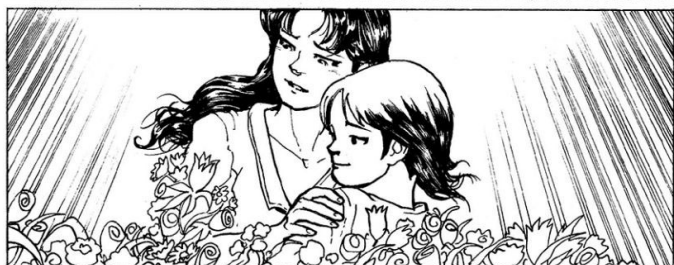


...THAT YOU  
HAVE A  
NAME?!!

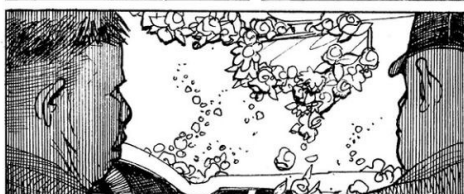
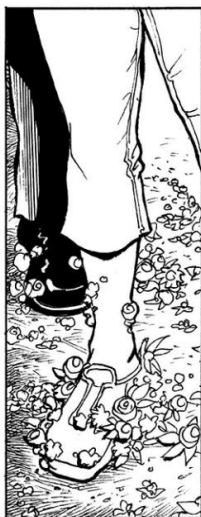




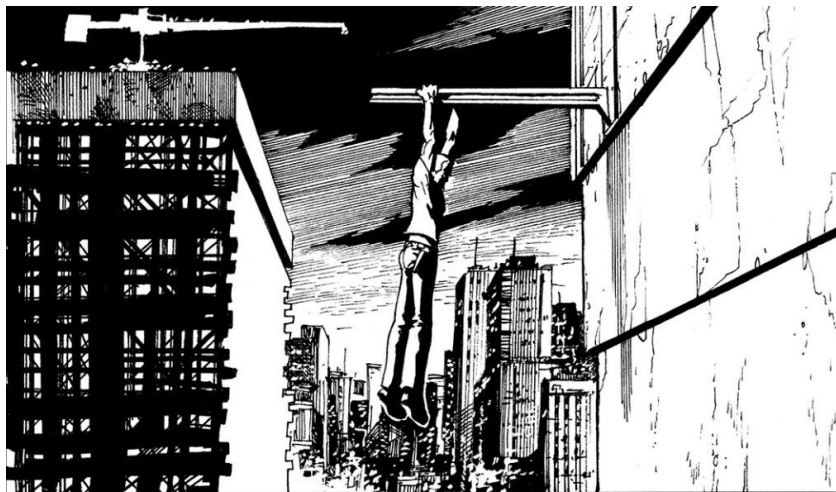




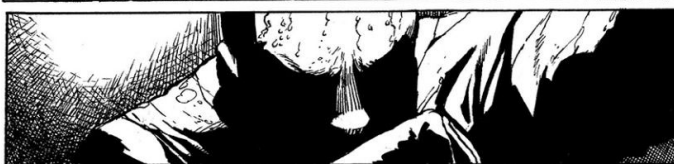
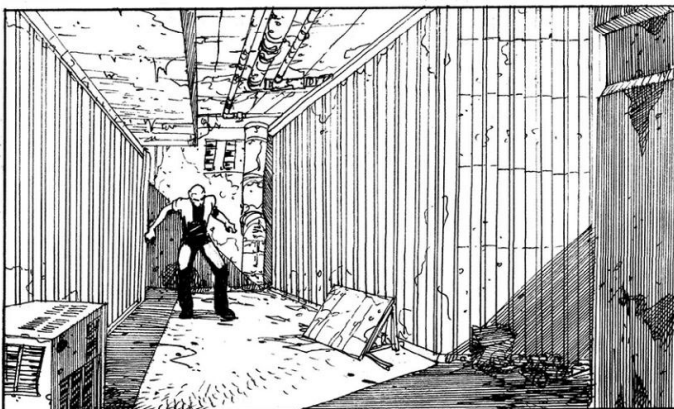




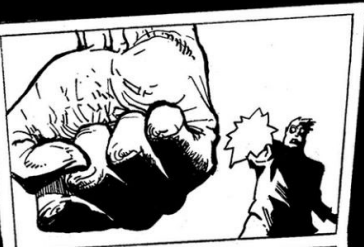






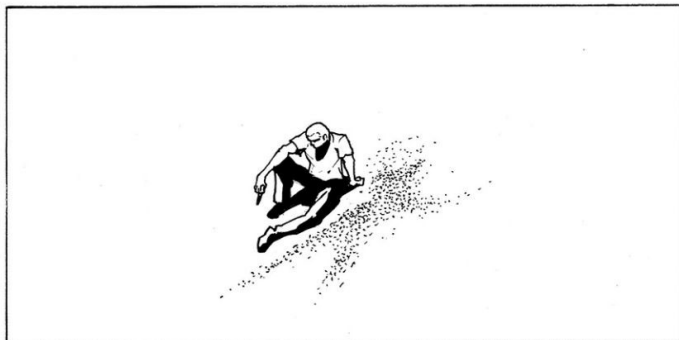
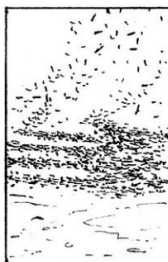
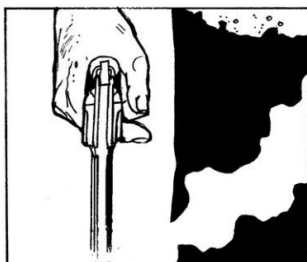


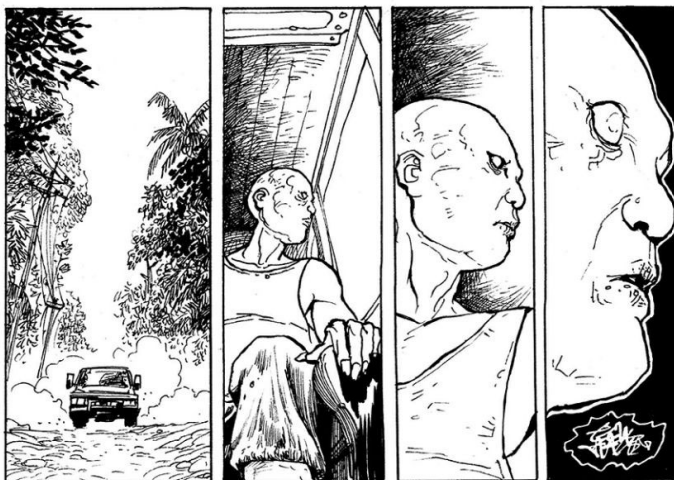


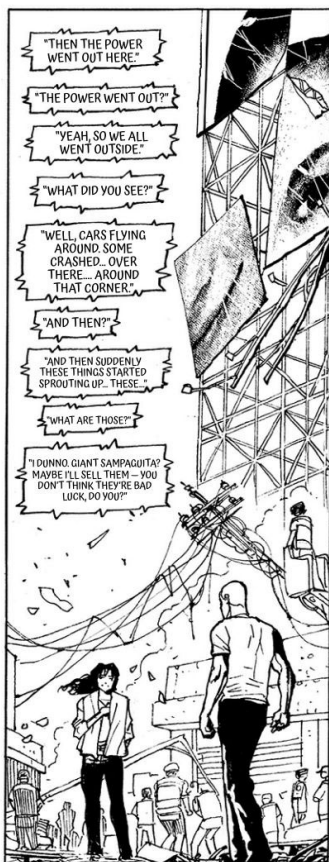


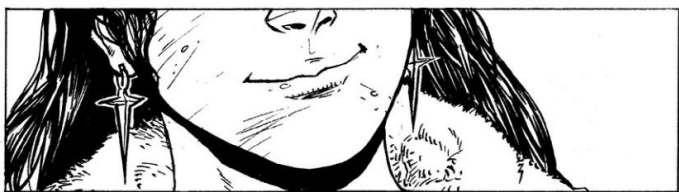
















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for believing in me.







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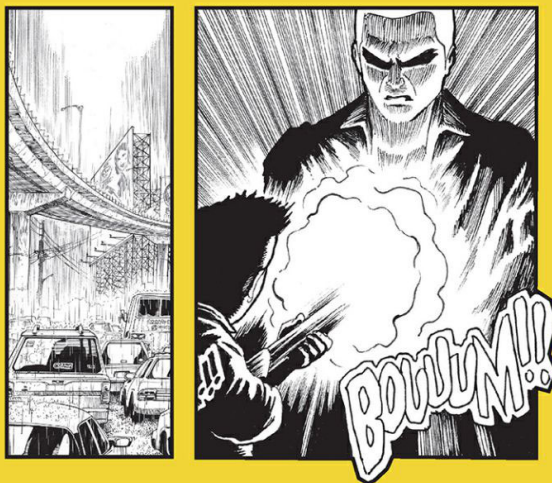
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